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TRUMAN-LEADERSHIP

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HST URGES OUTGOING PRESIDENT
ASSERT STRONG U.S. LEADERSHIP

BY HARRY S. TRUMAN

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In less than four months the Democratic and Republican
conventions will nominate their candidates for President, one of
whom will be the next President of the United States.

And we may as well accept the fact that the world from now
on will tend to look more in the direction of the eventual successor
and less to the outgoing leadership in the White House. In the
minds of statesmen everywhere, as a matter of international realism,
the question is certain to be raised: what can the President of
the United States do in the final months of his term?

This places the country and the free world in an anomalous
position and makes it more than ever necessary that the voice of the
President be clear, resolute and unmistakable in expressing the
fundamental foreign policy of the United States.

Whenever the President of the United States expresses the
true position of this country as a leader of the free world, he can
count on the support of all of us.

Personal popularity of a President, especially when he is on
foreign soil, is something all of our people are glad to see. But

Truman-Leadership--Page 2

it is no substitute for action.

We cannot help but be disturbed when we see the Communist world speaking in one voice through one dominant leader, seeking to take advantage of some of the discords among the Allied leaders. This is where the role of the President is especially important as a unifying leader of the free world.

I do not think there is much doubt about the purpose of Khrushchev's visit to Paris. It certainly is not intended as a test of personal popularity but is conceived mainly for the more determined business of seeking to divide the Allies. Anything that serves to weaken the allied position, serves the Communists, and Khrushchev would like nothing better than to widen the wedge between France and the Allies over NATO. Ever since NATO was set up the Communists have been trying to break it. If he succeeds, Khrushchev could destroy an effective deterrent against Communist designs in Western Europe. I hope there is no justification for some of the uneasiness in the West over President deGaulle with respect to NATO, and I would remind all the Allies that they have provided too many opportunities for Khrushchev to exploit their differences.

In the state of the world today this is no time for the President of the United States to falter, or to hesitate. He must leave no room for doubt as to what our position is on all the critical issues affecting the peace of the world. He must be especially vigilant not to let it appear that he is marking time until the next President takes over, thus leaving the Communists with the impression that we are drifting and might be open to compromise on such issues as West Berlin or that we might yield to the unremitting pressure of the Communists on any of the other vital issues that divide us.

With the approach of the Summit meeting, Khrushchev recently suggested that no one "rock the boat." He is again appearing in a role of sweetness and light, after in fact rocking the boat considerably during his tour of Indonesia, with renewed threats about Berlin.

The fact is, that since Khrushchev's visit to the United States, and his invoking the so-called Spirit of Camp David nothing practical has been achieved toward resolving the differences between the West and the East.

Everything that Khrushchev has done recently has been to make it appear that Russia is the Saint and the United States the

Truman-Leadership--Page 3

villain.

Khrushchev talks grandiously about total disarmament and the removal of foreign military bases. We would be the first to welcome such a possibility if we did not know from experience that, if for instance, American and British soldiers were withdrawn from the continent, Russia would walk in.

Surely the many divisions Russia maintains in Europe behind her proper borders are not there for the purpose of keeping the Allies from venturing in her direction. The divisions of the Soviet Union are there for the sole purpose of subjugating independent peoples and intimidating the rest of Europe.

What Russia says and what Russia does are two different things. She will keep on forcing her way--diplomatically, politically, economically and militarily--on the rest of the world. She will keep on doing this as long as she thinks that she has a chance to succeed, or if we are ever careless enough to provide her with a chance or an excuse to succeed.

The visit of Mikoyan to Cuba was a brazen attempt of the Communists to establish an outpost right off our shores. This does not square with Mikoyan's previous appeals to this country for friendship and trade, when he visited the United States.

Along with most Americans I had great hopes that the revolution of Castro would result in benefitting the people of Cuba. There was obvious exploitation of the people in Cuba by the previous dictatorship and outside interests. No one will dispute the need for many reforms that have been long overdue in Cuba--including orderly land reform.

Fidel Castro is proving himself the captive of forces that are damaging to the future of Cuba and her people. His inexperience and naivete about the nature and methods of Communist intrigue has already been clearly demonstrated. Cuba has already had more than her share of troubles from within and from without, and I fear she is again due for even more serious trouble. The Cuban people are deserving of a better fate than that.

In their struggle to improve their lot they may be certain of the fullest sympathy of the American people. And they can count on American concern for the maintenance of their independence from

(more)

Truman-Leadership--Page 4

international Communist ambitions and subversion. Let us not forget that this nation once responded to a situation confronting Turkey and Greece when they were threatened with subversion and invasion by the Communist.

But the gravest mistake we can make is to pattern our action on what the Russians do. Now that we are entering the twilight zone of a Presidential year there is urgent need that the Allies have no misgivings about our leadership so that they do not undertake unilateral action as a reaction to Russia's ceaseless proddings.

The basic foreign policy of the United States is a continuing force and should not be subjected to narrow partisan political debate. The President, during the remainder of his term, is no less the leader and spokesman for our policy. And when he exercises that leadership with boldness and decisiveness he will have the support of all Americans. The President will be in charge until January 21, 1961, as he ought to be.

To prevent any misunderstanding on the part of anybody or the lapse in the continuity of our foreign affairs I would suggest to the President that when the conventions have chosen their respective candidates that they be invited to the White House to confer with him. And I think these conferences ought to be regularly scheduled so that these men can be completely informed and these conferences should be kept up to date until the voters in November decide on the new President.

And even as the political campaign is waged the meetings of the President with the rival candidates will let the world know that we stand united on the basic foreign issues even while we are changing the Chief Executive. For the foremost issue of our time is the preservation of peace and freedom.

It seems to me we ought to be less concerned about trying to second guess what is in the minds of the Russian leaders or what their intentions may be.

I think it is more important that we give them no room for doubt as to what is exactly in our minds particularly with respect to the maintenance of our position in Berlin. This is

Truman-Leadership--Page 5

especially important at a time like this when we are meeting with the Russians to deal with the problems of nuclear control and disarmament.

It is up to the President to make our position so clear and so firm that the Communists will not be left with any doubts as to where we stand. We must not give them any basis for assuming that because we are always ready to negotiate we will accept settlements on their terms.

End Truman-Leadership.